

Kent State University Library

Expanded by Addition

IN SEPTEMBER 1958, the doors to the new addition of the Kent State University Library in Kent, Ohio, were opened, and more than \$1,500,000 worth of service was made available to students and faculty. It was this concept of service about which all plans were formulated, about which the building was constructed, and about which the library is being operated.

The plant itself is a modern structure, symmetrical and uncluttered. Far from being accidental, this appearance is the result of a countless number of hours of consultation between head librarian John B. Nicholson, Jr. and the architects Fulton, Krinsky, and DeLaMotte of Cleveland, Ohio.

Prior to his meeting with the architects, Mr. Nicholson visited a large number of well-known university libraries to determine not only which features of those libraries would be especially desirable at Kent, but also which have been troublesome, and would best be avoided. Mr. Nicholson's efforts in this direction, coupled with his already vast knowledge of the subject in general, have resulted in the erection of a structure which is among the finest of its kind anywhere.

The addition itself is exactly as wide as the old library, 130 feet, and is 155 feet in length. Ceiling height of the first floor is ten feet, but on the second and third floors it is nine feet and six inches.

This article is based on an interview with John B. Nicholson, Jr., Librarian, Kent State University, and is published with his permission.

In all, the addition will have a total floor space of approximately 60,000 square feet. This represents a 300 per cent increase in space which is available at the present time. The new area will provide room for more than 550,000 additional books. These, when added to the 165,000 currently in the stacks, will bring the grand total of volumes to 715,000. An appropriation of \$80,000 has already been approved for book purchases during the first year. The seating capacity, now 300, will be increased to 1,400, and will consist of 175 single-place seats and 1,225 four- and six-place seats.

The more than three hundred windows of the three-story addition are of the heat-refracting type. These windows permit maximum utilization of natural light but at the same time reduce by approximately 33 per cent the heat therefrom. The low-level-brightness lighting is provided by 2,325 fluorescent light tubes which are ceiling-recessed, and which provide optimum lighting for reading. To insure over-all comfort, the entire building is air-conditioned.

The 20,000 square feet of the first floor is covered by terrazzo, except that the circulation area has cork tile flooring. On this floor are located the library staff offices, a technical processes area, the circulation department, the main card catalog, a special collections room, and a 108-seat lounge. The lounge is furnished with single- and double-place seats, a hi-fi set, a radio, television set, and a tape recorder.

A unique method is employed to control the sound in the lounge area. Known

as the intermittent-sound system, it operates on the theory that a person unconsciously adjusts the volume of his voice to equal the volume of any other noises present so that he may be heard. Following this principle, then, music is played at short intervals throughout the day. When the music is played, those present adjust their voices so as to be heard above the sound of the music; when the music stops, the volume of the voice is lowered because there is less noise to overcome in order to be heard. By controlling the volume of the music, one can thus control the general volume of the speaking voices in a given area over a given period of time, for it is the volume of the music that establishes the pattern originally.

With the addition to the library, the system of operation is changed from the

functional to the subject division system. The subject division system lends itself more directly to satisfying the needs—both present and contemplated—of the university. Each of the three divisions is allotted an entire floor, and in each division are found all materials and services related to it.

The social studies division occupies the second floor. Here the floor tile is a light brown, and the stacks a suede brown. On the third floor is the humanities division. The tile on the floor is a light green, and the stacks are a matching seafoam blue. One of the main features of the third floor are the four soundproof listening rooms for the use of those who wish to use recordings. The science and technology division occupies the old portion of the library.

(Continued on page 234)

Voltaire in Leningrad

"In three large Russian cities—Kiev, Moscow, and Leningrad—I visited both libraries and universities. I was not prepared by what I had read previously for what I was to see. The libraries and universities were filled, with men and women of all ages, but, for the most part, with young men and women deeply and seriously engaged in intellectual and scientific endeavor. It was a revelation to look into great reading rooms and to see every seat taken at every table and to observe that others were waiting to fill vacancies as fast as they occurred. It was a unforgettable experience to walk through the stacks and see students and librarians, as thick almost as ants, at work on amazing collections of books, including many present-day American writers in English-language editions.

"I asked in the vast Leningrad Public Library if I might see a collection of which the library was especially proud. In less time than it takes to tell it, I was surrounded by the magnificent library gathered through his life time by Voltaire. When I asked if I might look at a book particularly treasured among those historic volumes, the cooperative custodian of the collection took down several and handed to me the first posthumous volume of Helvetius, printed in London in 1774. Almost every page bore interlinings and marginal notes in ink in the hand of the great philosopher. On the first flyleaf was the French ('Si Dieu n'existait pas il faudrait l'inventer') as written out by Voltaire for these words: 'If God did not exist He would have to be invented.' I do not need to tell you how astonished I was that this book with this inscription should have been chosen by a librarian in Communist Russia in fulfillment of my request."—*Irving Dilliard, from a speech delivered at Mount Holyoke College.*

chief of the division for scientific classification in the Social Science Library of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., died suddenly on October 31, 1958, at the age of

seventy-four. Trofimov was distinguished both as a teacher and as a constructive thinker in both descriptive cataloging and classification theory.

Carpenter Hall

(Continued from page 204)

mestic and foreign government technical reports, and a special collection on sanitary engineering. A corridor from this room leads to a series of faculty studies. These are small offices which are assigned on a temporary basis to staff members of the College and to visitors who wish to make extended use of the library.

The library has been in operation for several months in its new quarters. A comparison of attendance figures for a similar period in the fall of 1956 shows that use of the library has tripled. Several innovations that were tried have met with wide approval. The individual study desks in the reading room are very popular and are usually filled first. The microfilm and typing room which has

full acoustical treatment is used not only for these purposes, but also by students who wish to talk together quietly about their work.

The present collection covers all fields of engineering offered in the curriculum. The allied fields of economics, architectural planning, mathematics, chemistry, and physics, as they are applied to engineering, are also represented. Much material which was scattered in out-of-the-way areas because of the inadequate space in the old library is now brought together in Carpenter Hall. Now with sufficient room for expansion, plans are under way to enlarge this collection and make it one of the outstanding research facilities in the country.

Kent State

(Continued from page 216)

On the second and third floors, special classroom areas may be formed through use of accordion walls. Except for these, there are no walls in any of the main areas. Such areas will be compartmentalized by arrangement of the stacks. This type of division permits a great deal of flexibility for it is easily changed to meet any needs that might arise.

Persons using the library are permitted complete freedom in the stack areas, but as a means of expediting withdrawals, one may merely request a book at the circulation desk. The order will then be forwarded to the proper division where the book will be located and then dispatched to the circulation desk by means

of a book lift which serves all three floors.

At present the library staff consists of fifteen professional librarians, fifteen non-professionals, and fifty students. The students provide approximately two thousand hours of assistance per year. To operate the enlarged library, five professional and five non-professional staff members will be needed.

Perhaps the most phenomenal aspect of the entire project, and one that best indicates the emphasis placed on the concept of service, is the fact that during the entire period of construction, despite the ever present noise and dirt, the old library was kept operative, and never at less than 75 per cent efficiency.